

when firnile roamed the region with his friends "the red and yellow ochreous fields, spreading under the oppressive sun, were for the most part planted merely with stunted almond and olive trees, with branches twisted in positions which seemed to suggest suffering and revolt. Afar off, like dots on the "bare stripped hills, one saw only the white-walled *lastides*, each flanked "by dark, bar-like cypresses.

The vast expanse was devoid of greenery; "but on the other hand, with the broad folds and sharply defined tints of its desolate fields, it possessed some fine outlines of a severe, classic grandeur."¹

Apart from the plain, "but very characteristic of the region, were the Infernet gorges, near which Frafrgois Zola planned one of his huge reservoirs. There one found "a narrow defile between giant walls of rock which the blazing sun had baked and gilded. Pines had sprung up in the clefts. Plumes of trees, appearing from below no larger than tufts of herbage, fringed the crests and waved above the chasm. This was a perfect chaos. "With its many sudden twists, its streams of blood-red soil, pouring from each gash in its sides, its desolation and its solitude, disturbed only by the eagles hovering on high, it looked like some spot riven by the bolts of heaven, some gallery of hell."²

There were also the villages, whose houses, at
times, were
mere hovels of rubble and boards, some
squatting amid
muck-heaps, and dingy with woeful want;
others more
roomy and cheerful, with roofs of pinkish tiles.
Strips of
garden, victoriously planted amid stony soil,
displayed plots
of vegetables enclosed by quickset hedges.
Much of the
aridity of the region had arisen, from the
ruthless deforest-

¹ "Le Docteur Pascal."